



Comptroller General
of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20548

Westfall
1-1-5000

Decision

Matter of: Corbin Superior Composites, Inc.--Third
Reconsideration

File: B-242394.7

Date: December 20, 1991

Tedi D. Corbin for the protester.
Jennifer Westfall-McGrail, Esq., and Andrew T. Pogany, Esq.,
Office of the General Counsel, GAO, participated in the
preparation of the decision.

DIGEST

Request for reconsideration of prior decision denying
protest is denied where ground of protest not addressed in
original decision does not provide basis for reversing or
modifying that decision.

DECISION

Corbin Superior Composites, Inc. for the third time requests
reconsideration of our decision, Corbin Superior Composites,
Inc., B-242394, Apr. 19, 1991, 91-1 CPD ¶ 389, in which we
denied its protest of an allegedly overly restrictive
technical requirement in invitation for bids (IFB)
No. N00104-91-B-0001, issued by the Navy Ship Parts Control
Center for inflating cylinders to be used on U.S. Navy life
rafts. Specifically, Corbin objected to the requirement for
visual inspection of the cylinders between the endurance and
burst test portions of the first article test and for the
rejection of any cylinders exhibiting any unwrapping of
fiberglass.

We deny the request for reconsideration.

In its second request for reconsideration, Corbin Superior
Composites, Inc.--Second Recon., B-242394.5, Aug. 20, 1991,
91-2 CPD ¶ 169, Corbin argued that in our initial decision,
we failed to consider an excerpt from the Navy manual
governing the inspection, testing, and repair of inflatable
life rafts that it had furnished as an exhibit. The excerpt
in question provided that in inspecting and testing
cylinders already deployed in the fleet, the inspectors
should:

"Visually inspect the exterior and, to the extent
possible, the interior of the cylinder. Defects
such as cuts or gouges through several layers of

glass fiber, dents or bulges, deep or extensive abrasion cutting several layers of fibers, excessive corrosion or pitting, stress corrosion cracking or defects which may adversely affect the serviceability shall be noted and shall be cause for rejection. Some judgment is necessary to separate those defects which may affect service life from those which are minor and cosmetic. Note that it is normal to observe some light resin crazing (a network of light cracks) parallel to the glass fibers in cylinders that have been pressurized. Areas of scratches or abrasions that penetrate through the cylinder protective coating shall be touched-up with a clear epoxy resin prior to hydrostatic testing."

Corbin maintained that it would have been consistent with the procedures set forth in the Navy manual for the Navy to have permitted it to repair any breaks in the barrier coating of its cylinders caused by the unraveling of the hoop wrap.

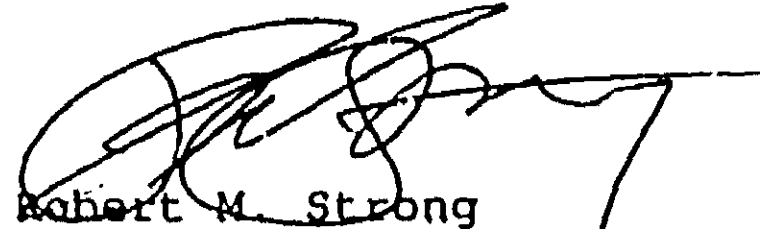
We held that to the extent the protester was arguing that this excerpt from the repair manual supported its contention that a slight break in the barrier coating of the cylinder, such as occurs when its hoop wrap comes loose, does not impair the physical integrity of the cylinder, this was an argument that Corbin did not raise in conjunction with its original protest and therefore could not raise in a request for reconsideration.

In its current request for reconsideration, Corbin asserts that it did in fact raise this argument in its initial protest. Corbin points out that in its comments (on page 19) on the agency report filed in response to its protest, it argued that the Navy manual, by noting that some light resin crazing is normal in pressurized cylinders, recognized that any impairment to the barrier coating did not necessarily indicate cylinder failure.

We agree with the protester that the language in the repair manual concerning crazing--and, even more significantly, the language indicating that scratches or abrasions penetrating through the cylinder protective coating should be touched up with an epoxy resin prior to hydrostatic testing--suggests that the Navy did not in the past view all penetrations of the barrier coating as impairments to the physical integrity of the cylinders. As noted in our decision, however, the Navy has in the recent past revised its views as to the potential seriousness of even minor impairments to the coating, as a result of its research showing that cylinders have been exploding due to a failure of their fiberglass laminate and its theorizing that the failure of the laminate

may be attributable to the absorption of moisture into the fiberglass, a process which would be accelerated if the barrier coating were in any way compromised. We therefore do not find that the above-cited excerpt from the repair manual supports the protester's argument concerning the physical integrity of cylinders with impaired barrier coatings or shows the unreasonableness of the Navy's determination to employ the questioned technical requirement.

The request for reconsideration is denied.



Robert M. Strong
Associate General Counsel